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BRIEF RULES FOR EXPLORATION OF THE CHEST, IN DISEASES OF THE LUNGS AND HEART.

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Since the discoveries of Laennec, which have constituted the most important acquisition which medical science has received during the present century, various treatises of a general or partial character have appeared, on the subject of exploration of the chest. Although the experience of more than twenty years has tended to confirm rather than invalidate almost all the laws established by that distinguished man, yet a good deal of refinement and of modification has been introduced into this branch of science by some of the more voluminous writers on the subjects which it comprehends. Many physicians and students, it is apprehended, are on this account deterred from making themselves familiar with the fundamental principles of an art, without which no accurate knowledge can be obtained of the nature or degree of thoracic diseases.

For this reason it has appeared to me that a brief and intelligible exposition of the more essential laws of this art, as it is practised at the present day, would not be unacceptable to a large part of the medical profession. Such rules at least are more easy of remembrance and of application, than the extended discussions of more diffuse writers.

In the physical exploration of the chest, a series of problems for solution is presented to our attention by the external phenomena of that part of the body. Each of these phenomena is a sign bearing a fixed and definite relation to some particular conditions of the internal organs. By a correct interpretation and comparison of these signs, we arrive at a knowledge of the state of the organs, whether in health or disease, which without them it would be impossible to obtain.

Of the Examination of Shape.—In perfect health the chest is for the most part symmetrical and equally proportioned. In disease certain changes of form are liable to take place, and to these it is necessary that the observer should direct his attention. The patient to be examined should sit erect, in a warm room, with his chest uncovered, and the arms down in similar positions. He should be placed directly opposite to a front light, since unequal or side lights produce deceptive impressions in the comparison of prominent or depressed surfaces. The following circumstances should then be observed, and the inferences resulting from them should be tested by the other modes of exploration.

If one shoulder, including the scapula, is constantly raised, it may proceed from curvature of the spine, from pleuritic effusion, pneumothorax, or more rarely from an internal tumor. If the spaces above and below the clavicles, or those between the ribs, project on one side more than is natural, we may suspect emphysema, pleurisy, or pneumothorax, on that side. If the same spaces be preternaturally depressed, there are frequently old adhesions of the pleura underneath them, with sometimes cicatrized cavities, in the lung; or the lung, after being compressed by disease, may not have recovered its due dilatation. A prominence in the region of the heart is natural in some persons. When preternaturally great, if it be pear-shaped, with its perpendicular diameter longest, it should lead us to suspect pericarditis. If it be oval and transverse, there may be hypertrophy of the heart. But these characters are by no means constant. Various irregularities in the conformation of the chest, arise from softness or other change of the bones in rickety constitutions, and they may also take place in some persons, especially children, without any important disease.

The sides of the chest may be successively measured by carrying a string or tape from the middle of the sternum to the spinous process of the vertebra, below the nipple, or on the level of the greatest apparent projection. If one side is found decidedly larger than the other, there is reason to apprehend the effusion of fluid, or less frequently of air, into the cavity of the pleura; or the enlargement or morbid growth of some internal part.

Of Percussion.—The art of percussion is founded on the familiar fact that a hollow body resounds when struck, while a full body does not. Thus in percussing a cask, or the inner wall of a house, we can decide whether it is empty or filled up, and in most instances can determine where the vacant space begins or ends. Percussion is employed in medical practice to indicate the condition of that part of the body which is immediately within the point percussed. Any portion submitted to this test, will sound more or less hollow, in proportion as air, or a denser substance, predominates in the spot upon which percussion is made.

As it is sometimes painful to the patient to percuss directly upon the surface of the body, it is now common to employ an intermediate substance, called a pleximeter, to receive the impulse of the blow. Various pleximeters have been employed, made of ivory, wood, and India rubber. But one of the most convenient is the finger of the hand of the operator which is not in use, laid firmly and flat on the surface which is to be percussed. It may be variously turned, at the discretion of the operator, to fit the different curvatures of the chest. But in comparing corresponding parts, care should be taken that the finger used as a pleximeter should be placed at the same angle, upon each part, and that it be held upon it with equal pressure. For want of attention to this point, important mistakes are committed.

Percussion is commonly performed with the ends of all the fingers at once, holding them so that the last phalanx shall be perpendicular to the surface percussed. A single finger answers the purpose in many cases. The stroke, or tap, should be short and quick, since in this way the clearest sound is elicited. Percussion requires to be repeated with different degrees of force, in estimating the seat of morbid changes. For superficial affections, slight percussion is sufficient; but to elicit the modifications of sound which belong to deep-seated changes, more forcible percussion is needed. It is desirable, however, not to give pain to the patient in any case.

Some inconvenience is experienced from the disadvantageous position, when we percuss surfaces of different obliquity, and especially on the side next the operator. To obviate this difficulty, I have used, in the Massachusetts General Hospital, for the last three years, a *percussor* formed of an elastic ball of woollen yarn, covered with velvet, about an inch and three quarters in diameter, with a handle five inches long. This instrument has the advantage of great freedom of motion, as evinced by the circumstance that the operator may percuss with it any part of his own chest. It has also the mechanical advantage, that the centre of percussion falls within the percussing part, which is not the case when the hand is used. Its use is attended with much more despatch than that of the fingers, and the sound of one may be employed to test that of the other. The tone varies in proportion to the hardness or softness of the ball, in regard to which a medium is best. It is carried inserted in a stethoscope, the ear-piece of which, if thickened and used edgewise, makes a good pleximeter, more convenient to hold than any other.

For the satisfactory performance of percussion, the patient, if able, should sit up, either uncovered or with a single thickness of covering. It is essential, when opposite sides are to be percussed, that their position and covering should be similar, to enable us to form a just comparison. While the anterior surface is percussed, the patient should sit erect, with the shoulders back, and both arms in the same position. When the posterior surface is percussed, he should fold the arms and stoop forward. A child is most conveniently examined lying over the nurse's shoulder. To facilitate percussion under the axillæ, the arms should be raised over the head. When the patient is too sick to sit up, the operation becomes more difficult. Still we are able to percuss the anterior and lateral parts, and if the patient can turn upon his sides, the back also becomes accessible.

In health the percussion is most resonant where there is most lung, and the least integument, muscle or bone. It is therefore most sonorous in the axillæ, and in the inferior regions of the chest. It is somewhat less so below the clavicles, and still less so upon and above them. It is dull upon the spine and the scapulæ, and somewhat so upon the mammæ and pectoral muscles. Yet these latter give a sufficient sound, if properly compressed by the pleximeter.

The two sides of the chest should sound alike in healthy persons, with the exception that the part of the left side occupied by the heart gives a duller sound than the corresponding part of the right side. This portion, called the præcordial region, extends from the middle of the sternum to the left nipple, and from the base of the chest, obliquely to the junction of the sternum with the third or fourth rib. A source of inequality is found in the lower part of the left chest, from its proximity to the stomach, in consequence of which it becomes resonant when that organ is distended with gas. But in this case the sound is peculiarly sharp and tense, having the tone which Piorry has denominated *stomachal* resonance. The right side, also, at its lower part emits a duller sound, from the proximity of the liver. With the foregoing exceptions, the healthy chest should sound alike, or nearly so, on the corresponding parts of opposite sides. And if there be a constant and evident difference in the sound elicited by percussion from the two sides, we are justified in inferring that one side or the other is a seat of disease. In estimating the results of percussion, we should not compare different individuals with each other, except in cases of great peculiarity, for perhaps no two individuals yield precisely the same sound, owing to the size of the chest, the amount of integument, &c. But the same individual may always be compared with himself.

Normal sounds are those which are naturally emitted by healthy persons under exploration. In disease the sound of percussion is liable to become *preternaturally* resonant on the one hand, or *dull* and *flat* on the other. The sound is termed preternatural, when the part percussed is more resonant than in health. If the resonance is excessive, it is called *tympanitic*. It exists in emphysema, in which disease the air vesicles are enlarged; also in pneumothorax, in which air exists in the cavity of the pleura.

The sound of percussion is termed *dull*, when the resonance of the chest is less than natural; and *flat*, when there is little or no resonance, the sound in this case resembling that which would be yielded by the fleshy part of a limb, if percussed. Dull and flat percussion are different degrees of the same thing, and take place when a portion of light vesicular lung is replaced by a denser body. This may be a foreign or different substance, such as an enlarged heart, a tumor, or an effused fluid; or it may be a portion of the lung itself consolidated by disease, as in hepatization, and tuberculous infiltration, the former occurring in pneumonia, the latter in phthisis.

If the chest emit a dull or flat sound, which shifts its relative position whenever the body is moved from one posture to another, always occupying the lowest situation, we may conclude that there is effused fluid, which by its own gravity seeks always the lowest level.

There is a peculiar sound sometimes heard in percussion, which is dull and jarring like that of a cracked earthen vessel, and called by the French *bruit de pot fêle*. It is best heard during expiration, and with the patient's mouth open. It occurs in phthisis, and indicates a cavity in the lung, immediately within the percussed part. The diagnosis is rendered more certain if on light percussion the part gives a dull sound. In rare cases the cracked sound is met with when the lungs are healthy.

(To be continued.)

EMBRYOTIC INFLUENCES.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

Sir,—Notwithstanding the hopes entertained that the "absurd notion" of an influence exerted by the imagination of the mother over the fœtus in utero, had long been exploded, and notwithstanding a writer in your Journal, two years ago,* "could not have imagined it to prejudice the mind of any man belonging to the medical profession, there [illegible] to be a vague suspicion lurking in the minds of some of the [illegible]rate members of said profession, that there is at least some foundation in fact for the origin of the prejudice or notion referred to." This suspicion betrays itself by an occasional blossoming of an old wife's tale amid the leaves of this and other journals, bedecked by preface and apology, as though its animating spirit was a *mens conscia recti et veritatis*, but mortally afraid of being disintegrated by the stilet thrusts of the scientific, or pelted down by the pills of the practical.

Two years ago, in the opinion of Dr. Goulding, an essay of this kind, in that enlightened age, required some notice. But since that period, whether large and repeated doses of animal magnetism have produced an insensibility to lesser stimulants in the minds of the faculty, or whether from a general and uniform acquiescence with Dr. G., that his essay afforded a satisfactory solution of all the embryotic problems that ever have been, or will be offered to the public for many years to come, together with a sufficient castigation of the absurdities and weakmindedness of the illiterate members who dare to propose them, it is certain that a universal *tolerance* of similar communications has prevailed among the correspondents of the Journal to this day. Of this favorable disposition not to hear, nor to believe, but to be silent, I shall avail myself, to relate a couple of facts which lately fell under my observation, and accompany them with certain remarks which I conceive will tend to place the hypothesis in a position where it will be regarded as an object worthy of scientific investigation.

The facts are these. 1st. In the month of December, 1838, while visiting the hospital attached to the House of Industry at South Boston, by invitation of Dr. Palmer, the physician, I frequently saw a child, about a year old, with a mark on the cornea of the left eye. It consisted of a black spot with a white ring surrounding it, bearing so close a resemblance to the pupil of the eye and iris, that no one could avoid being struck with the sight. It was nearly of the size of the natural pupil, and occupied the lower and outer quadrant of the cornea. The mother, whose name was Patten or Padding, gave the following account of it. For a year previous to the birth of the child she lived in the house with a woman whose name was Collins, who had, as she expressed it, a double sight to her eye; in other words, a mark, of which that on the eye of her own child was an exact resemblance, except that the woman's was a trifle nearer the centre or axis of the eye. To this woman the mother stated herself to have been strongly attached, and to have passed much time in her company. It was my intention to seek out the original, had I remained in Boston through the present season, for I considered the case so strongly marked as would set the question of embryotic influences forever at rest, could the woman's story be proved to be true. It may happen to some reader of the Journal to meet with her in the course of a professional tour, and he will then have it in his power to confirm or overthrow this statement.

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* Medical and Surgical Journal, Vol. XVI., page 347. Embryotic Influences, by Dr. Goulding.

2d. About the same time, or soon afterwards, I was called to visit a woman in South Boston, one of whose children had a hand with but four fingers, adhering together in two pairs nearly their whole length. The arm was a little crooked and small, while the other was uncommonly large and powerful. This woman also stated that for a number of months before the birth of her child, she was daily visited by a child with a similar hand and arm in all respects. Of this child she took much notice, and gave him food whenever he came to her house.

I might mention other remarkable cases which have been communicated to me by persons of credibility out of the profession. Of barberries which now ripen on a person's breast in the proper season for its kindred to ripen, which are green when they are green, and red when they are red; of a fatal case of smallpox which was communicated to the fœtus without the mother's becoming affected by it; of a woman who was frightened by her husband bringing into the room where she was, a young alligator, and who presented him, shortly afterwards, a near approximation to a living crocodile; of the settling of a minister with red hair over a parish within fifteen miles of Boston, and the presentation of thirteen candidates to the baptismal font with red hair within a single year; of all these and many more I choose to remain silent, partly because I have not seen these wonders myself, and partly because of the tales of scandal which they might provoke in this cold, uncharitable world. It is not, however, the fear of filling the mind of the delicate and sensitive female with "nightly imaginings of horror," which restrains me from speaking out more fully, for apart from the consideration that scarcely a woman can be found in the common walks of life who is not a believer in the superstition, more good than harm will grow out of the diffusion of the belief, from its being calculated to restore and preserve that peace and harmony in families, compared with the importance of which, the forebodings of an anxious mother lest her offspring may be deformed or marked, are unworthy of mention. For in the midst of doubts and fears, there are hopes. But it must be a hard-hearted and chilling philosophy that would, with a single stroke of the pen, expunge the stamp of conscious virtue from the brows of thirteen mothers of red-haired children, along with the pastor of his flock, whose only crime, perhaps, consisted in his arresting the attention and fixing too steadfastly the gaze of his hearers. Yet let Dr. Goulding ask himself whether, in his sympathy for the mothers about to be, he did not forget his charity for the mothers that are; whether in quoting the statement from Hunter with approbation, he was not (innocently no doubt) his aider and abettor, in a charge of a most libellous nature.

It may serve to throw light on the cause of these phenomena, granting them true—or if this is not conceded, it may help to render them more probable—to contemplate with them a series of facts which, however wonderful, are generally acknowledged by naturalists.

It has been clearly ascertained that the eggs of birds, in many instances, are colored like the surrounding objects among which they are deposited.* "Several hundred of examples might be enumerated of caterpillars resembling in color the substances on which they feed. Many, though they feed on green leaves, resemble in color the gray or brown bark on which they rest when not feeding. One species is mentioned which is said to assume the color of the lichens which it feeds on, being gray when it feeds on a gray one, and yellow when it feeds on a yellow one. Of the extraordinary tropical insects popularly termed walking leaves, the wing cases not only in *color*, but in texture and even in veining, are so exactly like leaves, from the fresh green of those newly expanded, to the faded brown of those withered and fallen, that botanists themselves might be deceived if they were detached from the insects and exhibited as real leaves. On the other hand, the spectres, as they are called, resemble the smaller branches of trees with their spray, and so minutely detailed is this mimicry, that the very snags and knobs, as Kirby and Spence remark, are accurately imitated."

Now how is this resemblance best accounted for? Is it by supposing it to be ordained by the Creator for the purpose of concealing them from their enemies, or by attributing it to an irregular or modified operation of the law of their organization? The author of the treatise on Insect Transformations, in the Library of Entertaining Knowledge, objects satisfactorily to the first of these opinions, that there are more instances where this resemblance is wanting than where it is found; that these insects are armed to defend themselves, like others, and hence that it would indicate a partiality, in the mind of the Creator, towards some of his creatures, not discernible in the rest of his works.

How stands the other proposition? We know that there is a disposition inherent in all objects to impress both their color and images on any medium, provided it is favorably disposed for receiving and retaining them. This fact is well established by the discoveries of Daguerre and others in photogenic drawing, and indeed is what any one might infer as often as he looks into his glass.

We have also reason to believe that if any form of matter is adapted to receive and retain such impressions, it is animal matter in that peculiarly mobile and plastic state which attends the evolution of the fœtus, or the transformations of insects.

If we allow, then, that the progeny is the reflected image of the progenitor, without confusing ourselves by endeavoring to understand the mode in which that reflection takes place, it surely cannot border in the least degree on the absurd to suppose that the influence of surrounding circumstances may occasionally be so strong as to mask the original tendency, and substitute a new reflection in its stead, whether it springs from a conception within the mind, or the direct impression of a visual object. The reflection of the countenance, of the mental and bodily dispositions of the parent, in the child, no one doubts; yet by what law of optics are they explained? Is it difficult to conceive of the reflection of the color and image of a leaf on the clear gelatinous fluid from which the wing of an insect is evolved, as it passes from the state of a chrysalis to that of the image, with sufficient force to impress upon it the hue and shape which belong to the leaf, when that same hue and shape would paint itself on the screen of Daguerre's camera obscura if placed before it? The only resisting force is one impressed upon it at the time the egg of the insect was formed, viz., the parental reflection, which cannot be supposed to be much more powerful than the inertia or the existing chemical affinities of the particles in the paper in the physical experiment. It appears to me plain that this is a full and satisfactory solution of those cases where there is a resemblance between visual objects and the parts of animals. One other is, indeed, possible, which is that the reflection may take place through the medium of the mother. In either case, one fact common to both is proved, viz., the reflection of the image of an object on a structure in its formative state, either mediately through the parent, or immediately by the physical laws of light. The former case, though not understood, is no more at variance with nature than is the reflection of the features of the father in the son; while the latter is open to no objection whatever.

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* **Library of Entertaining Knowledge: Insect Transformations.**

The conclusion to be drawn from these facts and observations must have been already suggested to the mind of the reader; it is that certain physical and external conditions will occasion deviations in the law or laws of organization.

The two next questions relate to the supposed influence of the mother's imagination in producing the effect, and the presumed necessity for a nervous connection between the mother and fœtus in order to the transmission of an influence from one to the other. The mysterious union of the mind and body, and the equally mysterious connection between parent and child, should teach any one caution how he draws conclusions on the strength of his knowledge of either. A woman may have a longing for a particular fruit, and the likeness of that fruit may be impressed on her child's body, without their being anything, either physically or metaphysically, absurd in the idea. Physically, because we have reason to suppose that the physical condition of the system which attends the conception of an object is the same with, or closely analogous to, that condition which attends the perception of the same object, and it would thus stand on the same ground with the belief of the reflection of the image of any object directly before the eye. Metaphysically, because it accords with the principles of a philosophy which has numbered among its advocates a great proportion of the most distinguished men of ancient and modern times. The forms of things existed, according to Plato, as archetypes in the divine mind, preliminary to their being made visible in the world of sensible things. Cousin declares the mind of man to be one with the mind of the Deity, and makes that volition which raises an arm a part of that volition which once moved "upon the face of the waters." Is it anything more than following out these principles to say that the form of a thing existing in a human mind, may be traced in a human production, as a new creation? True, we cannot follow the form from its conception by the mind, to its perception by the bodily eye. But then no more can we follow volition, nor lay a hand on any point of space, or note down any period of time, between the mental feeling and the bodily act. If the human mind is a spark caught from the divine mind, and if it was, as Plato says, essential to the creation of things that their forms should pre-exist in the divine mind—or, in other words, that the pre-existence of the former necessarily occasioned the existence of the latter—that the intellectual forms, ideas, or images, blending with incorporeal matter, produced palpable or sensible forms, then an intellectual form, idea or image, existing within that isolated portion of the divine, which constitutes the mind of a human being, displays itself in the body with which that mind is in relation, while in the state of transition from incorporeal to corporeal substance, but in accordance with the law by which all things were created. And he who laughs at the old women for an opinion which observation has forced upon them without reasoning, is at liberty to laugh at Plato for an opinion which the depth of his reasoning disclosed to him without observation. A mother's mark, if there is such a thing, is a new creation. All science teaches that if a new creation takes place, it will be by the same law by which old things were created. Now I do not say positively that a woman's longing marks her child, or that Plato's ideas are correct. But I do say that this correspondence between ideas of a new creation, and the old, arising from sources so different, entertained by minds so opposite in their endowments, ought to protect them from ridicule, if, indeed, it does not afford the greatest possible a priori probability in favor of the truth of both opinions, or, at at least, that there was an element of truth from which both opinions were derived.

It is important to distinguish between those mental operations which are objects of conciousness, and those which are not. We are conscious of sensations, thoughts, feelings, and volitions, but we are not conscious of the action of our frame during a sensation, thought, feeling or volition. Nor can we experience, as a matter of consciousness, the formative motions (or whatever they may be) which give origin to any bodily structure. Hence there may be, for aught we know, a principle which is neither matter nor mind, but which, by different modes of activity, gives rise to the phenomena of both, as they present themselves to our finite consciousness. An outward impression may excite the activity of this *tertium quid*, so as to give rise to a perception within a mind, at the same time that it moulds a new image corresponding to that impression in the body to which that mind is joined. In which case, the stronger the impression, the more vivid the perception and the more perfect the image are likely to be; while, as they are both effects of a common cause, the absence of the one is not incompatible with the presence of the other. Thus a woman in pregnancy may have a strong presentiment that her child will have an extra thumb, and find it so at birth. Another may have the extra thumb without the presentiment, and a third the presentiment without the thumb, and all be reconciled by this supposition. For it is not the presentiment which produces the mark or image, but a principle which gives rise both to the presentiment and the image, and which is resisted by whatever occupies the mind in the former case, and by the law of organization in the latter, and either resistance it may or may not be powerful enough to overcome; so that it is no matter of astonishment that either the presentiment or image should appear without the other on this hypothesis—while without it, it is strange that there should be a coincidence between the presentiment and the extra formation.

By what train of reasoning a correspondent of the London Lancet, who has lately given a remarkable example of this coincidence, should immediately afterwards, on the occurrence of an extra thumb without the presentiment, conclude that there was nothing in the hypothesis of the influence of the mother's imagination, I am at a loss to conceive. The single rule of three direct teaches, from three numbers given, to find a fourth, which shall be in the same proportion to the third that the second is to the first. This correspondent, it seems, was in possession of the three terms, but instead of finding the fourth, he made use of the third to prove that there was no proportion at all between the first two. This, I suppose, is according to the single rule of three retrograde!

About three months since, a young man was brought into this port with the smallpox. Five members of the family of which he is an inmate had the smallpox within a month after his arrival, and these are the only cases that have happened. I should have been inclined to think that they caught it of the young man. But as there is no reason to suppose that he himself was exposed to the contagion, as it was ***not known*** that he came in contact with any one sick of that disease for a long time, and as no other of the crew of the vessel to which he belonged had it, it must be a satisfactory proof that smallpox is not contagious!

Another coincidence, equally striking, is opposed to the doctrine which supposes a nervous communication necessary between the mother and child for the transmission of the required influence. We have, if there is anything in animal magnetism, evidence of thoughts, sensations and volitions, communicated from individual to individual without nervous connection—things which were once thought to require the use of nerves as much as organic processes. But animal magnetism is defunct. It is condemned by almost all the journals, and fairly put down by the newspapers. It is a thousand times more dead than though it had been put down by argument. Embryotic influence is also absurd. You cannot, by appealing to one absurdity, draw any support for another. Two negatives make an affirmative, but two absurdities don't make a plausibility. All this is very true. But it is a little singular that animal magnetism and this other absurdity should aim at the same thing, viz., to deny the necessity of a nervous connection for the transmission of the most recondite mental and bodily influences. Surely nothing save a joint conspiracy between the old women and the magnetizers would have produced such a result as that one party by observation, the other by experiment, should affirm, the first that mental affections display themselves in bodily forms without nervous connection, the second that mental thoughts, feelings and volitions manifest themselves in other bodies than those in which they originate, without nervous or any other obvious connection between them; while the philosophy of Plato and Cousin is appealed to, to supply the connecting link between the two trains of asserted facts (which it does by making mind the primeval repository of bodily forms as well as thoughts, sensations, volitions, &c.). All this argues so great a degree of cunning, and such a profound acquaintance with the transcendental metaphysics among the old ladies, as to be nearly as hard to believe as the absurdities of magnetism and embryotic influences themselves.

There is yet one more coincidence which I would call to mind, in connection with this subject—the story recorded in scripture of Jacob's rods. The bearing of this story is attempted to be met by ascribing it to divine interference. A miraculous escape, truly. But was it not a little singular that the Deity should interfere in that particular way which alone accords with the popular explanation of these facts, when the chances of his adopting some other method were as infinity to one? To me it has often appeared that the scriptures, if studied in the right spirit, might be as useful to the scientific in furnishing hints to the discovery of the laws which regulate the corporeal fabric, as to the legislator and divine in unfolding the maxims of government and the precepts of law and religion. One of these hints is contained in the passage just alluded to. Another, it is not unlikely, is contained in the lifting up of the brazen serpent, which has already been pressed into the service to help out the miraculous character of Jacob's rods. When it is considered how prominent are the nervous symptoms among the effects of poisoned wounds, especially the bites of venomous or infuriated animals, how obstinate their resistance to the antiphlogistic plan of treatment, and how great the power of music in soothing some of them, as in the instance of the bite of the tarantula, compared with the fact that impressions received by either of the three most highly specialized of the senses have produced if not cured convulsions, and the popular opinion in some of the eastern countries that a fixed gaze on *bright* objects is a cure for such wounds, there seems abundant reason to doubt whether there was anything miraculous in the charm of the brazen serpent, save in the inspiration which revealed to Moses the empirical practice, a reason for which was to be given by the progress of science in a remote age. The principle on which the bible is constructed contradicts the opinions and prejudices of no one era, while at the same time it keeps pace with human improvement by anticipating and recording, in enigmatical language, the most important scientific discoveries.

A well-authenticated case of vaccination, communicated by the mother to the fœtus in utero, is related in the Medico-Chirurgical Review for November, 1829. The mother was vaccinated nine days before the birth of the child, and a few days after its birth the child presented pustules on its arms, "*in the same number and at the same points as those which had previously appeared on the mother.*" Here was a case of sympathy between *part* and *part*, between *number* and sympathy without nervous connection, that recommends itself to the special attention of those objectors to embryotic influences who take umbrage at the mention of the part touched by the mother when alarmed corresponding to the part marked in the child.

Instances of an analogous sympathy might be multiplied, were it not that in this enlightened age their absurdity is too evident. At the present day the philosophic eye is an eye of sense. It recognizes no law between the will of the Deity and organized structures. It sees nothing in the face of nature but instruments and ends, organs and functions, machinery and results, tissues and properties of tissues. The laws of contagion are a mystery, sympathy and fascination curious, instinct a thing to talk oneself to sleep about, mothers' marks an old wive's tale, animal magnetism and natural somnambulism ridiculous, and phrenology the greatest step ever taken by the human mind in its progress towards infinite perfection. And why? Because there are no special organs in the body, of which contagion, instinct, sympathy, fascination, magnetism, &c., are appropriate functions; while for phrenology there are thirty-six organs as plain and distinct as muscæ volitantes before an apoplectic's eyes. The laws of organization, and consequently of health and disease, are metaphysical abstractions—there is no vital activity in nature, because it is neither seen, heard, smelt, tasted, touched; neither in healthy anatomy, nor in pathology.

The popular doctrine "founds all arguments in regard to the physical condition of man on the solid ground of anatomy and physiology." And what have been the grand results in this method of inquiry during the present century? The appearances of the organs after certain diseases have been disclosed, but the intimate nature of not one of these diseases is better understood. Huge volumes have been written on the structure of the brain, its nervous cords have been untwisted, its ganglionic knots cut, its net-work plexuses have been unravelled; and the result is that the brain is a mere collection of lymphatics and vessels, adapted to contain a finer fluid than the blood. Neither the nature of insanity, convulsions, tetanus, hydrophobia, their cause and seat, is a jot the clearer for all this minute and microscopic anatomy. The seat of the mind is doubtless in the brain as much as it is *in pollice pedis*; but about every argument which has been adduced to support the opinion that the brain is the organ of the mind, might be construed so as to prove with equal force, that the erect position of man is that very same organ. It is easy to perceive that while this continues the popular doctrine, no material progress can be made in the science of medicine. The scalpel and the microscope have revealed all that they were intended to reveal; they have proved that the body is no being *per se*, no self existence, but is as a tenement inhabited by a being which is neither seen nor felt, but which both sees, feels and reasons. And henceforth the physiologist who hopes to add anything to what is now known of life, must study the laws and operations of this invisible agent in the forms in which it manifests itself, instead of mistaking the form for the thing itself, and neglecting and despising phenomena which do not square with the arbitrary standard which he has set up for himself to judge of things, which, when his vision is brightest, he sees "through a glass darkly." B. H.

Gloucester, June 25, 1839.

BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, JULY 17, 1839.

NEW YORK JOURNAL OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

An examination of the first number of this new and elegantly executed periodical, satisfies us that Mr. Adlard is a man of correct taste in all typographical matters, at least; and if this is a specimen of what he intends to do while he exercises a controlling influence over the publication of the Journal, it will vie with the very best-printed quarterlies extant.

With the manifest facilities of the great city of New York for sustaining a work like the one before us, it has long been a matter of surprise that so many years have been suffered to pass away without commencing the enterprise. The city abounds with professional gentlemen of acknowledged literary and scientific attainments; and hospitals, most liberally endowed, besides dispensaries and other charitable institutions expressly designed for the medical treatment of the homeless and afflicted, offer the greatest possible variety of materials for the pages of a medical Journal.

In the publisher's address, he expressly assures the reader that this "had its origin among the older members of the medical profession in New York;" and "that the plan proposed has been matured by much reflection and will be pursued with energy and zeal." To show the amount of professional strength engaged in the undertaking, a list of collaborators was originally intended, which would have been gratifying to patrons, simply because there is an innate curiosity to know to whom we are indebted for instruction or agreeable entertainment of any kind. However, Mr. Adlard says, "a list of this kind would, in fact, have embraced all the medical talent of the city." The inference, then, is, that the physicians are united in the enterprise; and if such is the fact, the Journal must inevitably sustain the high character which it promises.

Those wishing to become subscribers, of which it is to be hoped there may be many in New England, may address the office No. 168 Broadway, or the various agents. The price is $5,00 per year, payable in advance, or $1,50 for a single number. As it will appear quarterly, the second number is to be published the first of October.

With regard to the articles which fill 244 pages, we shall have occasion to refer to them hereafter. The summary view of the progress of medicine in America, by Dr. John Watson, is really interesting, but not sufficiently copious in details. It is astonishing that no more credit has been meted out to the elder and present Dr. Warren, in the field of surgery. A case of bony tumor, by Dr. Rodgers, is one of peculiar value. Dr. Shook's hospital reports are deserving of particular commendation—there is an orderly exactness about each case.

We close these remarks by wishing our fellow laborers all the success which their industry and devotion to a noble science entitles them to expect from the members of a liberal profession in the United States.

Researches on the Effects of Tobacco, &c.—Unexpectedly the theory first broached by Dr. Mauran, of Providence, R. I., respecting the influence of tobacco upon the vocal organs, which took place in the course of an evening conversation, has since been extensively and thoroughly investigated by gentlemen in various parts of the Union. Several dissertations have been published already, and more have been received, which demand proper attention. It is not a custom, in this Journal, to allow any one topic to occupy so much time or space, as to become a fatiguing discussion—in this instance, however, it has been considered important to have the point satisfactorily settled, and to do so, it was necessary to collect the facts from a variety of sources. The whole subject, from the very beginning, was entirely a new one. Let the question of the utility or inutility of tobacco go which way it will in the end, it should not be forgotten that we are all under obligations to Dr. Mauran for his fearlessness and ingenuity, by which much important information has already been concentrated that was unwritten before.

To Dr. Woodward, of the Insane Hospital, and others, who contend that tobacco does a positive injury to the vocal apparatus, we feel no less indebted than to those who maintain the contrary opinion. As there is safety in a multitude of counsellors, so there is a fund of knowledge to be gathered from a multitude of experienced physicians.

Rhode Island Medical Society. Mr. Editor,—The following are some of the proceedings of the Rhode Island Medical Society at its late annual meeting, held at Newport, on the 26th ult. Johnson Gardner, *Sec.*

Pawtucket, R. I., June 6, 1839.

George Fabyan, Augustus N. Fisher, Levi H. Holden, and Henry W. Rivers, of Providence; Benjamin H. West, North Providence; and Lewis M. Wheeler, East Greenwich, were elected Fellows. Several distinguished gentlemen were also elected Honorary Members.

A very excellent and ingenious discourse was delivered by Dr. David King, of Newport, on Inductive Philosophy, as applied to the investigation of the science of medicine.

Drs. Theophilus C. Dunn, of Newport, and Usher Parsons, of Providence, were appointed delegates to the National Convention, to be held in Washington in January next.

To David King, M.D., of Newport, was awarded a premium of $50 for the best dissertation on erysipelas.

Dr. Wm. Richardson, of Johnston, was appointed first, and Dr. George Capron, of Providence, second orator, for the ensuing anniversary.

Medical Miscellany.—A correspondent declares that yellow fever has not raged at Havana for 13 or 14 years.—Dr. Oliver W. Holmes will deliver a poem before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, the ensuing commencement, at Dartmouth College.—Another medicinal spring has been discovered at Saratoga, which yields a more copious supply of water than any one heretofore discovered in that region.—Dr. William Rockwell, Health Officer at the Quarantine Ground, New York, last week entered a complaint against the master of the ship Christoval Colan, from Havana, for a violation of the quarantine regulations. The captain was held to bail in the sum of $3000, and his mate was committed to prison, not being able to obtain bail. The maximum of punishment for any violation of the

Port-health Laws, is $2000 fine and imprisonment for one year.—Through the instrumentality, principally, of Dr. Andrew Combe, of Edinburgh, *sago* bread, as a substitute for flour bread, which it is represented to equal in all respects, is now extensively made in Edinburgh and London.—Dr. C. A. Lee, of New York, is preparing a new Medical Flora of the United States. —Dr. Bushe's Treatise on Malformations, Injuries and Diseases of the Rectum, published by Mr. Adlard, begins to be better appreciated; it is unsurpassed for accuracy in the illustration of morbid appearances.—Dr. William G. Smith, late of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, has twice successfully performed lithotrity; first on a man 30 years of age, and in the second case on a patient aged 60, near Morristown, N. J., with the *brise-pierre* of Heurteloup. In the second instance, he broke a stone one inch and a quarter in diameter, at once.—The French steam vessel *Meteor*, at New York, has yellow fever on board—many of the crew ill. The fever is also, it is said, on board the British sloop-of-war Buzzard, at the quarantine.—Dr. A. Vaché has been appointed resident physician to the Bellevue Hospital, New York, *vice* Dr. William Wilson removed; Dr. Tonelier, physician to the Halls of Justice, *vice* Dr. Gilman removed; and Dr. A. W. Walters, City Inspector, *vice* Dr. H. G. Dunnel removed.

Whole number of deaths in Boston for the week ending July 13, 21. Males, 9—females, 12.

Of consumption, 3—old age, 3—scarlet fever, 5—child-bed, 1—disease of the womb, 1—inflammation of the bowels, 2—lung fever, 1—abscess on the lungs, 1—paralysis, 1—fits, 1—infantile, 1—stillborn, 2.

ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE.

THIS Institution received its charter from the Legislature of the State during the past winter, and commenced operations with a class of sixty-five students; thirteen of whom received the degree of Doctor in Medicine at the close of the session. The college edifice and its accommodations; the museum, theatre, dissecting rooms and laboratory, are all on a scale of magnitude and excellence equal, it is believed, to those of any similar institution in the country.

Choice and extensive collections of anatomical specimens and morbid preparations, with cabinets of materia medica, botany, mineralogy, geology, and zoology, together with casts, plates, drawings, models, instruments and apparatus for illustrating the different departments of study, have all been provided and arranged in the museum of the college, which will be open for the inspection of students during the lecture term.

The ensuing session will commence on Tuesday, October 1st, 1839, and continue sixteen weeks. The faculty consists of the following gentlemen.

ALDEN MARCH, M.D., President of the Faculty, and Professor of Surgery.
EBENEZER EMMONS, M.D., Professor of Chemistry and Natural History.
DAVID M. REESE, M.D., Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine.
JAMES H. ARMSBY, M.D., Professor of Anatomy.
DAVID M. MCLACHLAN, M.D., Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics.
GUNNING S. BEDFORD, M.D., Professor of Obstetrics.
THOMAS HUN, M.D., Professor of the Institutes of Medicine.
AMOS DEAN, ESQ., Professor of Medical Jurisprudence.

The fee for all the courses is $70. Matriculation fee, $5. Graduation fee, $20. Price of boarding, from $2 50 to $3 50 per week. For further particulars inquire of either of the gentlemen of the Faculty.

JAMES H. ARMSBY, *Registrar.*

***Albany, July,* 1839.** **Jy 17—tO**

FOR SALE,

AT this office, one complete set of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, belonging to the estate of a physician lately deceased. The volumes from I. to VII. are neatly bound in half-yearly Parts, the others are in sheets. Price $1 25 a volume, or $2 50 a year, for the whole, bound and unbound.

Also. vols. VI., VII., VIII., and XIV., XV., XVI. of the New-England Journal of Medicine and Surgery, bound.

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF THE STATE OF N. Y. (FAIRFIELD, HERKIMER CO.)

THE Lectures commence on the first Monday in October, and continue sixteen weeks.

Anatomy and Physiology, by - - - - - - - -	**JAMES MCNAUGHTON, M.D.**
Chemistry and Pharmacy, by - - - - - - - - -	**JAMES HADLEY, M.D.**
Materia Medica and Medical Jurisprudence, by - - - -	**T. ROMEYN BECK, M.D.**
Practice of Physic and Obstetrics, by - - - - - -	**JOHN DELAMATER, M.D.**
Surgery, by - - - - - - - - - - -	**FRANK H. HAMILTON, M.D.**

Fees for the whole course, $56. **JAMES HADLEY, *Registrar.***

Jy 17—4t

BERKSHIRE MEDICAL INSTITUTION.

The Annual course of Lectures in this Institution will commence the 8th of August, 1839, and continue thirteen weeks.

Theory and Practice of Medicine and Obstetrics, by - - - -	H. H. Childs, M.D.
Chemistry, Botany, and Natural Philosophy, by - - - - -	C. Dewey, M.D.
Pathological Anatomy and Materia Medica, by - - - - - -	Elisha Bartlett, M.D.
Anatomy and Physiology, by - - - - - - - - - -	Robert Watts, M.D.
Surgery, by - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	Willard Parker, M.D.

Fee for the course of lectures, $50; fee for those who have already attended two full courses at an incorporated medical school, $10; graduation fee, $18; board, including room-rent and lodging, as at other country institutions. Library fee, according to the number of books taken out.

Fellows of the Massachusetts Medical Society, and others, who have received the degree of Doctor of Medicine, are admitted gratuitously to the lectures.

Degrees are conferred at the commencement and close of the Lecture Term. The pre-requisites for admission to an examination for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine are—three full years' study under a regular practitioner of medicine—attendance on two full courses of medical lectures, in medical institutions regularly established, one of which courses must have been attended at this institution—a defensible thesis on some subject connected with medical science—an adequate knowledge of the Latin language, and a good moral character.

The examinations will be held in presence of the Trustees, Faculty, and Overseers of the Institution, and of a Delegation from the Medical Society. The thesis must be publicly read and defended. Gentlemen who intend to present themselves as candidates for a degree, are particularly requested to procure full and formal certificates of time and age.

Jy 3— *By order of the Faculty*, ROBERT WATTS, Jr., M.D., *Dean.*

PRIVATE MEDICAL INSTRUCTION.

The subscribers are associated for the purpose of giving a complete course of medical instruction. Their pupils will have regular access to the medical and surgical practice of the Massachusetts General Hospital. They will be admitted, also, to the practice of the House of Correction, which constantly presents a large number of important cases, and where opportunities will be afforded for acquiring a practical knowledge of compounding and dispensing medicines. They will be furnished with opportunities for the study of Practical Anatomy, not inferior to any in the country. To the pupils, particularly to those in the last year of their professional studies, facilities will be afforded for acquiring a personal acquaintance with private medical and obstetric practice. Instruction by examinations or lectures will be given in the different branches of medical studies, during the interval between the public lectures of the University. Books, and a room with fire and lights, will be furnished to the students at the expense of the instructers.

GEORGE C. SHATTUCK,
WALTER CHANNING,
JOHN WARE,
GEORGE W. OTIS, Jr.
WINSLOW LEWIS, Jr.

Oct. 31—eptf

ORTHOPEDIC INFIRMARY

FOR THE TREATMENT OF SPINAL DISTORTIONS, CLUB FEET, ETC.

At 65 Belknap Street, Boston. Patients from a distance can be accommodated with board in the immediate neighborhood. JOHN B. BROWN, M.D., Surgeon.

We the subscribers approve of Dr. J. B. Brown's plan of an infirmary for the treatment of Spinal Affections, Club Feet, and other Distortions of the human body, and will aid him by our advice whenever called upon.

John C. Warren, George Hayward, Edw. Reynolds, Jno. Randall, J. Mason Warren, John Jeffries. John Homans, M. S. Perry, W. Channing, George C. Shattuck, Jacob Bigelow, Enoch Hale, W. Strong, George Parkman, D. Humphreys Storer, George W. Otis, Jr., Winslow Lewis, Jr., J. H. Lane, Edw. Warren, George B. Doane, John Ware, George Bartlett, John Flint.

Boston, August 1, 1838. tf.

MEDICAL LECTURES IN BOSTON.

The Medical Lectures in Harvard University will begin in the Medical College, Mason street, Boston, the first Wednesday in November next, at 9 o'clock, A. M., and continue sixteen weeks.

Anatomy, and Operations of Surgery, by - - - - - -	John C. Warren, M.D.
Chemistry, by - - - - - - - - - - - - -	John W. Webster, M.D.
Midwifery and Medical Jurisprudence, by - - - - - -	Walter Channing, M.D.
Materia Medica and Clinical Medicine, by - - - - - -	Jacob Bigelow, M.D.
Principles of Surgery and Clinical Surgery, by - - - - -	George Hayward, M.D.
Theory and Practice of Physic, by - - - - - - - - -	John Ware, M.D.

At a meeting of the Faculty, it was

Voted, "That no two courses of Lectures shall be admitted to qualify students for gratuitous admission to Lectures in this School which have not been attended in separate years, or at least six months from each other.

WALTER CHANNING, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine.

Boston, July 10, 1839. Jy 17—tN

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL is published every Wednesday, by D. CLAPP, JR., at 184 Washington St., corner of Franklin St., to whom all communications must be addressed, post paid. It is also published in Monthly Parts, with a printed cover. There are two volumes each year. J. V. C. SMITH, M.D., Editor. Price $3,00 a year in advance, $3,50 after three months, or $4,00 if not paid within the year. Two copies to the same address, for $5,00 a year, in advance. Orders from a distance must be accompanied by payment in advance or satisfactory reference. Postage the same as for a newspaper.